

El Salvador: Martyred Nation

Following is the text of Pope John Paul II's Feb. 28 remarks on the situation in El Salvador.

I wish now to address a very special thought to the people of El Salvador. El Salvador, a name that evokes in all Christians a profound sense of reverence and of love, is the only country in the world that bears the holy name of Jesus, son of God and savior of mankind.



In recent months, the Salvadoran people, anguished by a fratricidal war which shows no sign of lessening, seem to have been joined to the passion of the Lord. Nearly every day hundreds of people are killed, and the sorrowful host of widows, of orphans, grows, while a throng of refugees — which already exceeds hundreds of thousands, in a country that has 3.5 million inhabitants — seeks shelter in the mountains or in nearby nations.

The guerrilla leaves a trail of mourning in the cities and villages and destruction of bridges, streets, economic installations of vital importance. On the other hand, the action of the armed forces, intent on suffocating the hotbeds of opposition, is no less hard and severe.

Many times the bishops of El Salvador have raised their anguished voices as pastors to beg that the violence be brought to an end and that the country be put into a position to give itself a just and peaceful social aspect.

The drama of El Salvador sends a vast echo ringing throughout the world, with different reactions for one or the other side, while the local population, innocent victims, pays a very high price of tears and blood.

"The arms come from outside," cried the Apostolic Administrator of San Salvador, Bishop-Rivera Damas, "but the dead are all our people!"

Is it not time to hope that this international emotion, instead of reproducing on a large scale the opposition that is tearing apart the tiny country, could make a common effort to stop the massacres and that the people of El Salvador could resolve without foreign interference the grave problems that afflict them? If this search for the good of all prevails it will not be impossible to overcome the obstacles, even those that appear insurmountable, in finding again the road of pacification and reconciliation.

I make mine the appeal of the Salvadoran bishops and I entrust to the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin, Mother of the Church, and comforter of the afflicted, the invocation and the yearning for peace of that martyred nation.

Geneva DeSales Achieves Success

By Joan M. Smith

Geneva DeSales High School will stay open. On Monday, March 8, the school's 11-member Board of Trustees unanimously voted to keep the school open and not to increase tuition.

alumni and businesses have been "unbelievable. They see it (DeSales) as a good thing."

Tracy sees a bright future for the school. Not only has a goal been set for next year's support drive, but he pointed to the fact that the school's enrollment is growing. The incoming freshman class is projected at 45 students which will bring the total enrollment to 190. Tracy said that the school is realistically aiming at an enrollment of 250, but that it will be achieved gradually.

DeSales has been on the brink of closing and over the past few months it has been a frantic race to insure that it wouldn't close in June. The success of the school's recent annual support drive guaranteed that DeSales would be open for business as usual come September. The drive's goal had been \$75,000 but \$86,000 was netted; enough, said Edward Tracy, principal, to pay off school expenses and debts, "and project a balanced budget for the 1982-83 fiscal year."

It will be the first time in seven years that tuition at DeSales hasn't been raised. Presently, tuition per student is \$700, with the actual cost of educating a student at \$1,600. The difference is met through such fund-raising events as the annual support drive which, according to Tracy, is important to the survival of the school.

In discussing the fund-raising project, Tracy, who has been principal of DeSales for seven years, said that

Fund Hits \$95,000; Pope 'Grateful'

Pope John Paul II recently told a group of U.S. congressmen en route home from Poland that he is deeply grateful to the American people for their aid to his homeland.

The seven members had met with Polish government and Catholic Church officials and stopped off for a papal audience on the way home.

The pope said, "Day after day, I personally see the expressions of solidarity and practical help that come from

the United States and in particular from the heart of her people — a people intent on responding generously and repeatedly to the needs of those afflicted by suffering of various kinds. . . . I am deeply grateful."

The Tribute to Poland in the Rochester area reached \$95,243, according to Father Joseph Reinhart, coordinator. Anyone wishing may send contributions to Tribute to Poland, 123 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y., 14604.



OLPH Alumnae

Mrs. Anna Nick and her daughter, Mrs. Diane Nick Wesgate, are planning for the first general Our Lady of Perpetual Help Alumni Association dinner-dance. Persons interested in attending the event are asked to contact Mrs. Wesgate, 148 Schnackel Dr., Rochester, N.Y. 14622; (716) 544-4608.

The Seven Last Words

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"My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection." (2 Cor. 12:9)

Personal suffering, discouragement and dissatisfaction are an inevitable phase of our lifelong conversion to the Lord, for unless we experience and accept our own powerlessness, we can never experience the fullness of the healing power of the Lord. For us, as for Jesus, the ultimate powerlessness of death must precede the ultimate healing of the resurrection.

The season of Lent challenges us to admit our personal powerlessness and to confront it in faith. In our society weakness often produces feelings of guilt, fear, shame and frustration; ultimately this lack of control can lead to despair. But Christ assures us that we can bear our personal crosses with confidence for "whoever would preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will preserve it." (Mark 8:35)

The genius of the Alcoholic Anonymous program is that it embodies these principles of conversion in the first two steps of its 12-step program:

Step one — We admitted that we are powerless over alcohol and that our lives have become unmanageable.

Step two — We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Anyone involved with the sickness of alcoholism realizes that these first two steps are so crucial that until an alcoholic admits his or her loss of control and makes a profession of faith, there is little that can be done.

I vividly remember a point made by the popular author, speaker and retreat master, Father Ernest Larsen, CSSR: "Practically everyone of us has some aspect of our lives that is out of control." Lent is an opportunity to begin to face up to an addiction, relationship, appetite, passion, resentment or fear that is "out of control" in our lives. It challenges us to take to heart these words of the suffering Paul: "I am content with weakness, with mistreatment, with distress, with persecutions for the sake of Christ; for when I am powerless, it is then that I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10)

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In this Lenten season let us join Christ in facing up to our powerlessness and crying out to the Father in faith; for Jesus promised, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would be able to say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible for you." (Matt. 17:20)

The conversion process begins when we have the courage to admit that we are powerless, and the faith that nothing is impossible.

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